



Department of Health

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To Our Partners in Violence Prevention:

I am pleased to present the Report on the State of Youth Violence in Rhode Island, developed by our community partners and the Safe Rhode Island Injury Prevention Program (SRI), with the support of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Cooperative Agreement # U17/CCU124343). Recommendations contained in this Report were developed with data and information on what works to create a plan which will help make Rhode Island a safer state for youth. Youth violence – homicide, assault, suicide, self-inflicted injury, sexual assault, and teen intimate partner violence – has become an epidemic in the United States. Homicide and suicide were the second and third leading causes of death respectively for Rhode Island youth between the ages of 15-24 (1999-2003).

The Report describes the burden of youth violence in Rhode Island, and identifies priorities, target populations and goals for prevention. Priority risk and protective factors that are shared among other risky health behaviors - such as substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and delinquency - are presented to identify prevention efforts that address a broad spectrum of youth risk taking behaviors and consequences. Recommendations are provided with the purpose of informing and enhancing Health Department violence prevention efforts, as well as the efforts of our community collaborators. To encourage implementation by as many key stakeholders in youth violence prevention as possible, SRI will partner with other State coalitions such as the Youth Development Advisory Council (YDAC) of the Rhode Island Children's Cabinet to engage community partners in two key activities to move the state recommendations for youth violence prevention forward: 1) Priority setting to identify specific programs for implementation; and 2) Developing funding strategies to support infrastructure.

The Department of Health looks forward to working with our partners on the important work of implementation; violence is a problem that no one group can solve alone. I hope you will find this Report a helpful tool and encourage you to use it to direct your efforts to prevent youth violence. Together, our interdisciplinary efforts can reduce youth violence by educating adults and children about prevention, promoting proven effective policies and programs, and searching for effective solutions to problems which do not yet have complete solutions.

Thank you for being a partner with the Department of Health as we strive to make Rhode Island a safer and healthier state. Please feel free to contact Beatriz Perez at 222-7627 if you have any further questions or comments regarding Safe Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Director of Health